

Meeting Notes

Region 5 Citizen Advisory Council Meeting

01/08/2008

5:30 PM to 9:30 PM

Fish, Wildlife & Parks

2300 Lake Elmo Drive

Billings, MT 59105

Meeting called by: Gary Hammond

Type of meeting: CAC Council Meeting

Facilitator: Gary Hammond

Note taker: Dianne Stiff

Attendees: Daniel Aadland, David Charles, Douglas Dreeszen, Daniel Dutton, Doug Haacke, Shawn Todd, Mike Whittington, Robert Willems, Dale Vermillion, Gary Hammond, Doug Habermann, Harold Guse, Dianne Stiff, Jim Darling, Randy Arnold, Lee Burroughs, Carillon Steorts, Dale Nixdorf

Observers: Dan Walker, Mike Penfold, Clint Hoxie, Bill Hope, Pat Rollwitz

Guest Presenters: Lee Burroughs

Agenda topics

5:30-6:00 p.m.	Welcome, Dinner & Conversation	Gary Hammond
6:00-6:30 p.m.	Introduction of new Members/Charter Review	Gary Hammond
6:30-7:00 p.m.	Issues of Concern	CAC Members
7:00-8:00 p.m.	Enough is Enough Presentation	Lee Burroughs
8:00-9:00 p.m.	2008 Hunting Season Tentative Proposals	Gary Hammond
9:00-9:30 p.m.	Wrap Up & Schedule Next Meeting	Gary Hammond

Introduction of new Members/Charter Review	Gary Hammond
<p>Discussion: Gary introduced 3 new members to the Region 5 Citizen Advisory Council.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dale Vermillion – Retired physician, been on the Billings City Council, City Zoning Commission, and Airport Commission as well as on the Resource Advisory Committee for the Yellowstone River Conservation District Council, and been a landowner in Sweet Grass County since 1972. • David Charles – Attorney in Billings, over the last twelve months spent time lobbying legislators in the Yellowstone County area on stream access and game damage during the legislative session, grew up in the 50's and early 60's learning to hunt and fish with his brothers, and is aware of the importance of relationships with hunters and landowners. • Daniel Aadland – Retired teacher, rancher, supervisor on the Stillwater County Conservation Board and writer. He considers the future of Montana's environment key to the legacy that his grandchildren will inherit. He has written 7 books that have been published and has a Ph.D. in English and American Studies. • Existing members, Dan Dutton, Doug Haacke, Doug Dreeszen, Bob Willems, Shawn Todd, and Mike Whittington introduced themselves. 	
<p>Review of Charter – Gary Hammond asked members to bring topics, and to identify problems and conflicts for FWP before they arise. Members serve in an advisory capacity. FWP provides information at the meetings that the CAC members can take back out to their constituents. Term limits were discussed. Gary will go over the dos and don'ts of CAC members during the legislative year at future meetings.</p>	
Issues of Concern	CAC Members
<p>Discussion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dan Dutton – Feedback from local and out of state hunters is they did well during the 2007 hunting season. Dan had calls for block management as early as August for September that worked out well. The out of state hunters would like more licenses opened up to them for sale, and locally the concern is the sale of land for subdivisions. • Doug Haacke – Brought up the fact that our Absarokee fisheries biologist Jim Olsen is leaving to take a fisheries biologist position in Butte. Doug said Jim did an outstanding job here, and felt it's a shame to lose him due to financial reasons. Question is what can FWP do about the starting pay being so low with the master's degree requirement? Who can we lobby and pressure? Explanation of the window between entry and market does allow the ability to move up more quickly, but Montana is still behind surrounding states with the FWP market pay scale. In addition surrounding states compete for potential applicants since their pay scale is higher. FWP crossed a critical bridge when wages became too little to buy a home. • Doug Dreeszen – It was brought to his attention that in the Ballantine/Pompey's area, an area of the Yellowstone River is closed off to the public. A cottonwood has been dragged down below the high water mark that is signed as no trespassing. One of our FWP wardens has talked to the landowner and provided signs that now say "no driving beyond this point" as there were people driving ATV's where there should not have been, specifically on private land. Doug brought up that there have been a lot of people driving back and forth on Alexander Road on the state section. Gary Hammond will have DNRC talk to the landowner leasing this state section. 	

- David Charles – How can you identify ATV's? Wardens agree that it is minimal to identify those whether the hard plate or off road sticker. Mike Whittington said that the MT Wildlife Federation is actively working on ATV use and will likely introduce legislation with regard to ATV identification.
- Bob Willems – The block management program is the best for sportsmen, but can be abused by both the participant and the user. He would like to see more areas in block management with more of his neighbors leasing to outfitters, which is a concern.
- Shawn Todd – Irrigators are interested in the MT/WY lawsuit, and there are lots of deer in the Roundup area.
- Dan Aadland – Subdivision is a major concern to him, and he'd like to see stronger incentives for landowners to not subdivide but hold onto their land and preserve the habitat. Gary Hammond brought up conservation easements as purchasing subdivision rights. In addition, looking at ways to go out into the private sector to address this subject and also look at conservation easement purchases.
- Dale Vermillion – His main concern is water rights. Discussed the contesting of his family's water rights on Sweet Grass Creek with the group.
- Mike Whittington – He questions the misinformation that is floating around on the hunting tentatives. He'd like to see FWP get a more brief straight forward way of getting this information out as the average blue collar hunter will not be reading the thick copy of the tentative hunting regulations. Another item is to have the funding of the Ft. Peck Fish Hatchery on our next CAC meeting agenda as a decision needs to be made for the upcoming legislature on funding of this hatchery.

Action item: Ft. Peck Fish Hatchery Funding – get onto the next CAC meeting agenda.

Person responsible: Gary Hammond

Enough is Enough

Lee Burroughs

Discussion: Lee Burroughs has been a game warden for just under three years in Region 5 at Lavina. Lee discussed the statewide campaign on Poaching Enough is Enough and the impacts within Region 5. FWP came up with this campaign to encourage people to call 1-800-TIP-MONT and gain more public and legislative support.

Presentation Highlights:

1. Law Enforcement Division is the frontline defense.
2. 107.45 FTE
3. 99 sworn officers
4. Several programs within FWP are supported by game wardens such as fisheries, parks, boating enforcement, water safety, snowmobiling, etc., but protection of wildlife is a major part of what they do.
5. Organized criminal activity has greater negative impact on our wildlife and hunting heritage than opportunistic violations.
6. Criminal Investigation Unit is working on 50 active investigations, with 30 open.

7. Dollars spent on investigations last year (2007) was \$37,000.
8. Cases discussed include the Kelly Frank State Record, Mullaney Duplicate License Fraud, Eastern Montana Deer Shooting Sprees, Illegal Bobcat Trapping Case, Joint Criminal Investigations with the Washington Fish and Wildlife, Big Elk License Fraud Case, Korenko Case, Huntley Poaching Project, Asparagus Point Elk Case, and several Waste of Game cases.
9. Wardens deal with waste of game; littering; off road travel restrictions; tagging furbearers; enforce trapping regulations; assist the Dept. of Livestock; fish overlimits; residency; assist hunters; and address big game overlimits.
10. Hoping to get the following with this campaign: regional investigators, redirect restitutions to fund investigators, attorney general office prosecutor, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service cooperation, Dept. of Revenue database merge, expand TIPMONT, and get this program out to Montana sportsmen.
11. Accomplishments – There are six out of seven regions that have investigators, restitution now goes to investigations, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service cooperation and almost all positions are filled in Montana, database merge accomplished, TIPMONT expanded, and a position with the Montana Highway Patrol is now funded.

Action items: Game wardens need to hand out Hunter Ethic's cards. Hunter Education presentations – all wardens have this same presentation for their home communities.

Person responsible: Game Wardens

2008 Fishing Regulation Final Changes

Jim Darling

Discussion:

- Bighorn River: The 13-mile section from the cable below the Afterbay to Bighorn FAS is no longer restricted to catch-and-release for rainbow trout. The standard, combined-trout limit of 5 fish, only 1 over 18 inches applies to the entire river.
- Bighorn Lake: The bass limit was increased from 5 to 6 daily (12 in possession), and the burbot limit was reduced from 5 to 3.
- Yellowstone River: The combined trout limit has been reduced from 5 to 4 daily and in possession, only 1 over 18 inches, with catch-and-release for cutthroat trout.
- Boulder River: The rainbow catch-and-release section from Natural Bridge to Two-Mile Bridge has become consistent with the rest of the river, that is, 2 trout, only 1 over 13 inches.
- Whitefish: The statewide limit for mountain whitefish has been reduced from 100 to 20 daily and 40 in possession.

Discussion:

At the December 20, 2007, FWP Commission Meeting, tentative regulations were brought forth and public hearings have begun. Locally our public hearings will be at the following locations:

Tuesday, January 8	Roundup Ambulance Barn	7:00 PM
Thursday, January 10	Harlowton, Kiwanis Club	7:00 PM
Tuesday, January 15	Red Lodge, High School Cafeteria	7:00 PM
Wednesday, January 16	Columbus, High School Cafeteria	7:00 PM
Thursday, January 17	Big Timber, High School Cafeteria	7:00 PM
Monday, January 21	Billings, Holiday Inn	7:00 PM

Gary highlighted the following issues:

- Fixed Season Dates – Do we want fixed opening and closing dates?
- Wolf Season – Proposal calls for a wolf hunting season contingent upon federal delisting. Tentative wolf season September 15-November 30; cost \$19.00 residents, \$350.00 non-residents. Tentative wolf regulations are available on-line at fwp.mt.gov.
- Youth Pheasant Season – Proposal is to create a youth pheasant season for the weekend prior to general pheasant opener.
- Mountain Lion – Allow any licensed mountain lion hunter to hunt during the fall season without dogs or the winter season with dogs, eliminating the need to specify a season to hunt. Mountain lion hunting by permit in Region 1 and parts of Region 2 will still be in effect.
- Biennial Season Setting Process – Proposal is to set big game harvest permit levels and quotas every two years instead of every year, based on a proposed harvest range approved by the FWP Commission.
- Elk Archery Permits – Proposal to limit archery elk permits in the following hunting districts: 410, 417, 620, 621, 622, 700 & 701 in the Missouri River Breaks; and 401, 403, 411, 412, 420, 425, 426, 441, 447, 450, 455, 500, 502, 510, 511, portion of 520, 530, 570, 575, portion of 580, 590, 702, 704 and 705. These areas will also have unlimited antlerless elk archery permits that are area-specific, available through the drawings. This will eliminate unlimited archery permits in the breaks, and change availability in the other areas. -Explanation: Landowners, Sportsmen, and Outfitters have not come to any consensus. With limited permit archery areas in region 5, there will be a hit on resident sportsmen, but it does address the crowding issue. This will put a cap on number of residents then only 10% of the permits are issued to nonresidents. Locally the Billings Rod and Gun Club are unanimously supporting this for the future of archery hunting in Montana. They are setting their self-interests aside in support of this proposal.
- Antelope 900 Archery – The proposal is to cap the number of unlimited (900-00) antelope licenses issued at 4,500. These licenses are valid in regions 3, 4, 5, 6, and 7 beginning August 15 each year. This would then limit non-resident hunters to 10% of the quota while easing some of the impacts to hunting access the unlimited licenses have had. It is also proposed to allow hunters to purchase up to three surplus antelope licenses.

Comments –

- It's important to keep openers on the weekend for families because of decline of the sport amongst our youth.
- How do we make greater incentives for Block Management more popular?
- Will the Department lose revenue with the archery permits?

Action Items: CAC members are to put their thinking caps on and come up with possible answers to sharing the resource with sportsmen, landowners and outfitters, and incentives for landowners.

Persons responsible: R-5 CAC Members

Wrap Up & Schedule Next Meeting

Gary Hammond

Discussion: Next Region 5 CAC Meeting is scheduled for April 29, 2008, 5:30-9:30 P.M.

Action items: Agenda items – Ft. Peck Fish Hatchery Funding; PLPW update.

Person responsible: Gary Hammond